

## THE BLIGHT OF INTEMPRENCE.

A few years ago, when an earthquake demolished the city Charleston and thousands of people were either killed or else sent homeless into the open fields to dwell in hastily erected tents the great heart of America was deeply touched and expressions of sympathy poured in from all over this broad land. When the grass-hopper plague destroyed the vegetation of the West and when later a drought made the crops a failure and the people were on the verge of starvation, the sympathies of the East were called out by the suffering West, and in quick response to the appeals for help, were sent out generous supplies for the needy. When year after year the yellow fever scourge of the South has entered home after home and carried soul after soul in quick succession into eternity, the Christian heart of America has sent up prayer after prayer to God to stay the relentless scourge of the home. When only a few years ago the flood of waters made so many people of the Conemaugh Valley homeless, made so many children fatherless and motherless, made fathers and mothers childless, made the wife husbandless, and the husband wifeless, and launched so many people suddenly upon the great shoreless ocean of eternity, how America's tears fell and her sympathies flowed in one broad channel toward the sufferers, but friends, the curse of intemperance, to-day the damnable liquor traffic is sending more souls into eternity than earthquakes, plagues, scourges and floods. It is cursing more communities, blighting more homes, wrecking more lives, filling more early graves than any other evil; it is estimated that there are 100,000 people in this country dying every year from the effects of the liquor traffic, and the statement falls upon our ears like an idle tale.

Few of us need go more than a few steps from our own door to find men who are moral, social, mental and physical wrecks brought about by intemperance. Is there anything that will touch with pity the heart of one, not accustomed to the sight, quicker than the sight of a drunken man. Few of us comprehend to its fullest extent the enormity of this evil that is cursing

this fair land from center to circumference because we have not studied it enough. It is not enough to know that millions of dollars are spent every year for strong drink, that childhood is driven helpless and hungry into the streets, that the happiness of whole families is broken up, that the air of every midnight is heavy with women's sobs and broken hearted prayers and wet with children's tears. But there is yet more for us to learn; alcohol is the crowning curse of the nation. It is a physical curse digging premature graves, it is a mental curse dethroning reason, it is a moral curse hushing the voice of conscience, it is a financial curse draining the pocket and filling the alms houses, the liquor traffic takes bread from hungry children's mouths, clothes wife and children in rags, shelters them in miserable filthy tenement houses along side of saloons and gambling dens, sends helpless innocent children into the streets to beg or steal and grow up more degraded even than the parent, nor is this all; but it is sending into eternity unprepared thousands of souls every year whom the blessed Christ died to redeem.

The evil effects of intemperance do not end with the drunkard but are entailed upon his children showing itself not only in a taste for drink in the child but often in nervousness, waywardness and even in idiocy and insanity, is there no remedy for the evil? Is Christian America asleep? Must mother still tremble for the growing boys and weep over those already ensnared into the death trap, must the heart broken prayers of neglected wives still ascend to the Father, must the pitiful cry for bread still be heard from drunkard's children, is there no remedy?

We have tried low license and high license, we have legalized the crime but no legal enactment in the world can make it right for the saloon keeper to make paupers and criminals and lunatics and idiots of his neighbors, we have tried restriction and regulation but it has miserably failed.

The curse will continue so long as breweries and distilleries and dram-shops are permitted and protected by law.

The axe must be laid at the root of the tree, and that axe is prohibition. The

American saloon is a disgrace to our civilization and the disgrace must be wiped out by the Christian manhood of our country. The power to annihilate the liquor traffic is in the government, but the government is in the hands of the people loaned to them for awhile. By and by God will come to the voters of America asking for an account of their stewardship, and it will be for you, my brother, you who have given your votes to legalize this colossal curse, to render an account for those souls for whom the funeral knell is pealing all over this broad land. We believe that when the Christian man votes as he prays and when every father in America votes as he will wish he had voted when he sees his own boy gone from his home and lost through the liquor traffic, the deadly curse will be wiped out and mothers and wives will breathe free at last.

We women have not the ballot and we do not want it if you will cast your votes to crush out the evil. My sisters, we have no vote in this matter but our Saviour gave us a commission more than 1800 years ago, he bade the women who went to the tomb go to his brethren and we will go to our brethren to-day.

Brethren, we come to you with our hearts full, we come to you praying you in God's name to give your voice, and vote to wipe out this evil that rises like a mountain in the path of Christian civilization, we come to you pleading with you in the name of Christ to stop this traffic in tears and groans and blood, in vice and crime and misery. Not only at the doors of the saloon keepers and the breweries and distilleries will be the murder of the countless victims of intemperance, but to the Christian voters of America who have failed to do their duty, will God's voice proclaim in the day of final retribution. "The voice of thy rother's blood cryeth to me from the ground."

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What makes selfishness such a deadly sin is that it is such a self-deceiving sin. A thief knows that he is a thief, a liar that he has told falsehoods; but a selfish man does not know he is selfish, hence he never repents of his sin.